

Drum Spice

Edition 1.0 · VST3, AU, AAX · macOS, Windows · Drum bus chain effect

This manual covers the full Drum Spice interface: the Shape engine built by CELEST DSP, the Flavor engine built by Audio Spices, and the shared shell that routes between them. A [PDF version](#) is available for offline reference.

01 · Getting started

What Drum Spice does

Drum Spice is a complete drum bus chain, built by two companies and shipped as one plugin. Put it on the drum bus, or on a single kick, snare or overhead pair, and work left to right: the dark panel is CELEST DSP's Shape engine, a three band EQ into a feedback style compressor into a tone stage. The cream panel is Audio Spices' Flavor engine, a doubler into a slap delay into the Drum Room convolution reverb into a tape drive.

Each panel is its own engine, made and licensed by its maker, and the two never read or write each other's settings. The route switch at the top decides which panel the signal reaches first. INPUT and OUTPUT trim the whole chain, MIX blends the processed signal against the dry kit, and every module carries its own amount and on switch, so a light touch and a fully processed kit are the same seven knobs at different positions.

Nothing here is a menu of algorithms. Every module is one sound with one main dial: turn it up until the kit does what you want, then stop.

Quick start

1. **Activate both halves.** Click ACTIVATE on each panel and sign in with that maker's account in the browser window that opens. An unactivated panel passes signal through untouched.
2. **Set a level.** Bring INPUT up until the meter sits in the top third on hits. The compressor listens to whatever you feed it.
3. **Shape.** Dial in LOW, MID and HIGH; push the compressor's INPUT until the GR meter moves on the snare and set OUTPUT to match; choose Natural, Dark or Bright and bring TONE in.
4. **Add flavor.** Start with DRIVE, Warm or Hot; its loudness stays put, so what you hear is tone. Then DOUBLER for width, a touch of SLAP DELAY, and DRUM ROOM with a room size and a DECAY.
5. **Try the other order.** FLAVOR into SHAPE puts the room and drive under the compressor, which pumps the tail. SHAPE into FLAVOR keeps the tail clean.
6. **Save it.** MENU › Presets › Save preset writes a plain file you can send to anyone with Drum Spice.

02 · The interface

A header, two maker panels, and an input and output strip. The window resizes from its corner, from 1180 × 600 up to 1900 × 920, and remembers its size per computer. Drag a knob vertically, double click it for its default, or click the readout and type a value; every control automates.

ELEMENT	WHAT IT IS
Route switch	SHAPE → FLAVOR runs CELEST first; FLAVOR → SHAPE runs Audio Spices first. The panels stay in place, only the order changes.
MENU	Presets, each maker's license, both companies' websites, and About.
INPUT	Trim into the chain, −24 to +24 dB, with a peak meter.
License and bypass	ACTIVATE reads LICENSE ACTIVE or TRIAL ACTIVE once licensed. BYPASS silences that maker's modules while the other panel keeps running.
EQ	LOW, MID and HIGH: three amounts over CELEST's drum voicings.
COMPRESSOR	INPUT drives it, OUTPUT trims after it, the GR meter shows the pull.
TONE	One AMOUNT, three characters: Dark, Natural, Bright.
DRIVE	Tape saturation, Warm or Hot, 4x oversampled, loudness matched.
DOUBLER	Two short modulated voices per side, cross panned, 40 ms spread, nothing doubled under 200 Hz.
DRUM ROOM	Convolution reverb from Audio Spices' own room model; DECAY and Tight, Room or Hall.
SLAP DELAY	One darkening echo, TIME 70 to 250 ms.
OUTPUT	Trim out, a peak meter, MIX against the dry kit, and BYPASS for the whole plugin.

03 · Controls

Shape: the CELEST DSP panel

EQ into compressor into tone, always in that order. Every amount defaults to 0, which leaves the signal alone even with a module switched on.

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
LOW	0 to 100%	0%	Amount of CELEST's low band voicing: weight and thump in the kick and low toms.
MID	0 to 100%	0%	Amount of the mid band voicing: body and knock in the snare and toms.
HIGH	0 to 100%	0%	Amount of the high band voicing: snap, stick and air in the cymbals.
COMPRESSOR INPUT	0 to +36 dB	0 dB	Drive into the feedback compressor. There is no threshold knob; the input is the threshold, and the readout is the drive gain, not a signal level.
COMPRESSOR OUTPUT	-36 to +12 dB	0 dB	Manual trim after the compressor, before tone. There is no automatic make up, so you set the level you want.
GR meter	0 to 24 dB	—	Gain reduction, held long enough after a transient to read. Reads LOCKED, BYPASSED or STOPPED when there is nothing to show.
TONE amount	0 to 100%	0%	How much of CELEST's analogue tone stage you hear.
Dark / Natural / Bright	3 characters	Natural	Natural is the stage as voiced; Dark removes high frequency energy, Bright adds it, both keeping the same nonlinear character.

Flavor: the Audio Spices panel

Doubler into slap delay into Drum Room into drive, always in that order. At 0, every module is out of the path, so the panel stays transparent until you turn something up.

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
DOUBLER amount	0 to 100%	0%	Two short, slowly modulated voices per side, cross panned behind the dry hit, high passed at 220 Hz so the kick fundamental and sub are never doubled.
SLAP DELAY amount	0 to 100%	0%	Level of a single echo that darkens as it repeats. Low settings thicken like a room; high settings read as a slapback.
SLAP DELAY time	70 to 250 ms	110 ms	Around 80 ms tightens a snare, 120 to 160 ms reads as a slap, 250 ms is a distinct repeat.
DRUM ROOM amount	0 to 100%	0%	Level of the room, a convolution reverb rendered inside the plugin from Audio Spices' own room model, not sampled from a real space.
DRUM ROOM decay	0 to 100%	55%	The modelled room's RT60: gone within a third of a second at 0, hanging for seconds at 100. A new impulse renders in the background when you change it, so the sound never drops out.
Tight / Room / Hall	3 rooms	Room	Three room sizes; DECAY scales each of them.
DRIVE amount	0 to 100%	0%	Tape saturation, 4x oversampled so hard settings stay clean of aliasing, with a measured make up curve so level holds steady and only tone and density change.
Warm / Hot	2 characters	Warm	Warm is round and dark; Hot is brighter and bites sooner.

Route, panels and the global strip

CONTROL	RANGE	DEFAULT	WHAT IT DOES
Module ON	on / off	On	Switches that module in and out with a short fade. Off behaves like amount 0.
Panel BYPASS	on / off	Off	Takes that maker's whole half out with a short fade. The other half keeps running.
INPUT / OUTPUT	−24 to +24 dB	0 dB	Trim into and out of the whole chain, each with a stereo peak meter.
MIX	0 to 100%	100%	Blend of the processed chain against the dry signal, sample aligned, for parallel drum processing inside the plugin.
Global BYPASS	on / off	Off	Takes everything out while keeping the chain's latency, so the bypassed signal still lines up with the host.
Route	2 orders	Shape → Flavor	Which panel comes first. Switching is a short crossfade, safe while playing.

The INPUT and OUTPUT meters are stereo peak meters, 0 to −60 dBFS, with a slow fall so a hit stays readable. The compressor's GR meter reads the gain cell directly and holds a transient's reduction for a quarter second, so a fast snare hit registers instead of flashing past.

04 · How it works

Two engines, one chain

Drum Spice is not one company's plugin with another's name on it. Each panel is a separate engine, written, tuned and licensed by its maker, and the plugin around them only routes, mixes and draws.

The route switch

SHAPE into FLAVOR runs EQ, compressor and tone first, then doubler, slap, room and drive: the compressor sees the raw kit and the room stays clean behind it. FLAVOR into SHAPE runs the Audio Spices half first, so the compressor works on the doubled, roomy, driven signal: the tail pumps with the hits, the slap ducks, and the EQ shapes the drive's harmonics. Both orders compute the same modules; nothing is approximated.

Latency and alignment

The plugin reports its total latency to the host so the DAW lines everything up. The Audio Spices half contributes six samples from the drive's oversampling filters, at every sample rate. Every dry path inside the plugin, the global MIX, the panel bypasses and the global BYPASS, is delayed by the same amount as the wet path, so nothing combs when you blend or compare.

The Drum Room

Most convolution reverbs load a recording of a real room. The Drum Room renders its own: an image source model of a shoebox room with a diffuse tail, computed inside the plugin at your sample rate for the room and DECAY you chose. There is nothing to license and nothing sampled, and the same setting sounds the same on every machine. Rendering takes a moment, so the impulse builds on a background thread and swaps in about a second after you let go of the dial; the convolution itself is partitioned so a long hall costs the same per block as a short booth.

The drive

The drive stage is the tape model from Audio Spices' Chilli saturator. Inside Drum Spice it runs at four times the session sample rate, so the harmonics of a hard setting land where they belong instead of folding back down as aliasing. A saturator usually gets louder as you push it, which can read as better until you match levels; the drive here carries a measured make up curve for both characters, so loudness holds steady and the only thing you are judging is tone.

The doubler

Two voices per side, each a few milliseconds behind the dry hit and slowly modulated, sent to the opposite channel. Because the spread is fixed and short, the attack of the hit is never doubled, only the body widens. The voices are high passed at 220 Hz before they meet the dry signal, so the kick's fundamental and the sub stay exactly as recorded and only the mids and highs thicken.

05 · Presets, licensing and the menu

Presets

Init returns every control to its default, the neutral chain. Save preset writes the current state into the presets folder; Import preset copies a file from anywhere into that folder and loads it; Export preset writes the current state to a file of your choice; Show presets folder opens the folder. A preset is a plain `.drumspice` file, both panels included, with no license information, so a preset from a friend cannot activate or deactivate anything and cannot start a trial.

MACOS

~/Library/Audio/Presets/CELEST DSP/Drum Spice/

WINDOWS

%APPDATA%\CELEST DSP\Drum Spice\Presets\

License

Two licenses, one plugin. The CELEST half is licensed by CELEST DSP through celestdsp.com; the Audio Spices half by Audio Spices through audio-spices.com. Owning one does not unlock the other, and an existing plugin license from either company does not cover Drum Spice: it is its own product. From MENU, an unactivated half reads Activate CELEST DSP or Activate Audio Spices; a licensed half reads Deactivate and asks before releasing that computer's seat. A half on a trial offers to buy a license instead, since trials cannot be deactivated.

Websites and About

MENU links to celestdsp.com and audio-spices.com, and an About panel showing the plugin version, the build of each engine, and the credits.

Two starting points

BUS GLUE

Shape into flavor, light on everything. INPUT +9 dB, OUTPUT -3 dB, MID 30%, HIGH 25%, DRIVE Warm 25%.

BIG ROOM SNARE

Flavor into shape, so the room pumps. DRUM ROOM Hall 45%, DECAY 70%, INPUT +18 dB, TONE Bright 40%.

06 · Install and support

Installation

Run the installer and tick the formats you use. Everything lands in the standard plugin folders, so any host picks it up on its next rescan. Look for Drum Spice under effects, filed under CELEST DSP. Restart your DAW and rescan plugins if it does not appear on its own; both engines ship inside the one plugin file, there is nothing else to install.

MACOS VST3	/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/Drum Spice.vst3
MACOS AU	/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/Drum Spice.component
MACOS AAX	/Library/Application Support/Avid/Audio/Plug-Ins/Drum Spice.aaxplugin
WINDOWS VST3	C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\Drum Spice.vst3
WINDOWS AAX	C:\Program Files\Common Files\Avid\Audio\Plug-Ins\Drum Spice.aaxplugin

System requirements

- macOS 10.15 or later, universal binary: native on Apple silicon and Intel
- Windows 10 or later, 64-bit
- Any VST3 or AU host; Pro Tools 2018 or later for AAX
- 44.1 to 192 kHz

Activation

Each half follows its own maker's account, not a specific computer. Click ACTIVATE on the panel, sign in with the email you purchased with in the browser that opens, and that half unlocks. Activation needs a one time internet connection; after that the plugin runs offline and checks in quietly when it can. The Audio Spices half allows up to 3 of your own machines per license; CELEST DSP sets its own machine limit for the Shape half. To move computers, activate the new one with the same account and deactivate a retired machine from MENU or your account. One time purchase, no subscription.

Free trial

Each engine runs its own free trial, in full, with no feature limits. When a trial ends, that panel passes signal through until you buy. The Audio Spices half runs a 7 day trial on an account; CELEST DSP sets the trial length for its own half.

Need a hand

For the CELEST half, write to support@celestdsp.com. For the Audio Spices half, reach their team at audio-spices.com/support. If the studio machine has no internet, contact either company from any online device and they will arrange an offline license for their half.

07 • Credits and notices

Drum Spice is a collaboration between CELEST DSP and Audio Spices. CELEST DSP designed, built and supports the Shape engine (EQ, compressor, tone), the shared plugin shell and the installers. Audio Spices designed, built and supports the Flavor engine (doubler, slap delay, Drum Room, drive). This edition describes the first release.

Drum Spice is a trademark of CELEST DSP and Audio Spices. CELEST DSP is a trademark of CELEST DSP. Audio Spices and the spice mark are trademarks of Audio Spices. Any other names mentioned belong to their owners and are used only to describe compatibility. The Drum Room is an original room model and is not derived from any recorded space or third party impulse response.

Built with the JUCE framework under commercial license. VST is a trademark of Steinberg Media Technologies GmbH, AAX of Avid Technology, Inc., Audio Units of Apple Inc.